

America Kelsey

*A Romance of the Great
San Joaquin Valley*

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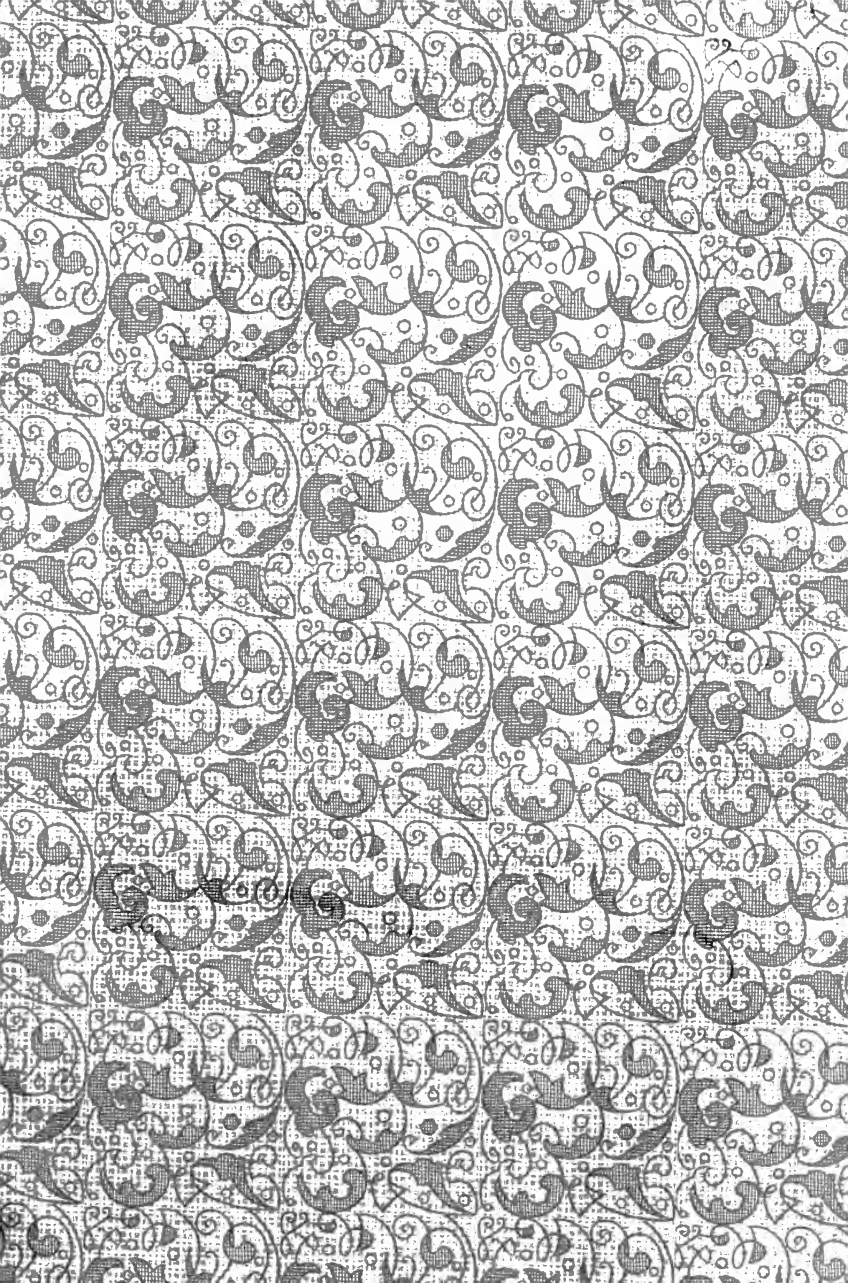
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By
DAVE S. MATTHEWS



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AMERICA KELSEY

Romance of
The Great San Joaquin Valley

By
DAVE S. MATTHEWS

ILLUSTRATED WITH REPRODUCTIONS OF SAN
JOAQUIN VALLEY SCENES

Stockton Record Print, Nineteen-fifteen.



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THE WONDERFUL RIVER THAT COURSED TO THE BAY AT YERBA BUENA

To My Wife

Photos by Logan
Engravings by Stockton Photo-Engraving Co.

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FOREWORD.

This is a fictional story of life in the great San Joaquin valley based on actual historical facts. The heroine is America Kelsey, the first white girl to live in the section of the state of California now known as San Joaquin county.

The names in most instances are those of people who actually lived there during the strenuous days depicted. The Indian tribes, history tells us, were as described.

The author has used the writer's license in weaving a romance that demands the use of fiction throughout. In fact, it's not a history—it's a romantic story of California life. To possible heirs of characters whose names have been used in this story, I beg their indulgence.

Respectfully,

DAVE S. MATTHEWS.

CHAPTER I.

A SQUARE MILE OF LAND.

America rushed into the tule hut that constituted the entire "city of French Camp," her golden hair partly screening the look of fear that marked her countenance.

Words were not needed to tell her father that it was the Yachekos. Similar experiences had made this fact evident. Then, too, there was no other reason why America would rush breathlessly into her home. True, the country abounded in wild animals whose haunts America's father had dared to penetrate, but they always ran from mankind unless cornered.

The Yacheko Indians did not receive their white brother and his family as desirable colonists, even though Thomas Gulnac, who was camped at the Cosumnes river, had the presumption to give Kelsey a square mile of land on the agreement that he would live there one year. Gulnac gave that which belonged to the Yachekos

and the Indians had taken exceptions to the white man's settling there. His intrusion into their hunting grounds was sufficient, let alone his unmitigated nerve in erecting a tule hut.

But Gulnac had a long head. He did not send Kelsey to his task unarmed. So far as the result of his "armament" was concerned it might have been a troop of cavalry, so effective did it prove to be.

The Kelsey family's protector consisted of a cannon mounted on a "swivel"—one that Gulnac had obtained from Captain Sutter. Kelsey always had it ready for action.

He kept it in front of the hut—far enough in front to prevent the recoil from working havoc with his palatial abode.

This pioneer of the San Joaquin was all action. Physical effort had to accompany thoughts in those days. He did not wait for America to tell with words what her countenance and actions explained. Closing the heavy door of his hut behind him, his next step brought him to the camp fire, the hot coals of which provided excellent means of putting his "battery" into action.

The Indians were just beyond the creek, which today is designated as French Camp slough. They were preparing for the last

rush. Kelsey dropped a hot coal on the priming hole, jumped to one side, and instantly the "battery" went into action.

The effect was all that could be desired. The Yachekos' ardor to give battle vanished as the sun on a cloudy day. For a moment they stood as though stunned; then mounting their ponies, rode with full speed toward the west. They went straight in the direction of Mt. Diablo, for even the Mount of the Devil was not as much to be feared as this weapon of the Devil that the white settler possessed.

Kelsey enjoyed the situation and he laughed loud and long as he watched the Indians fleeing westward. The golden rays of a California sunset constituted the searchlight by which Kelsey followed their course until he knew they had gone with no intention of making another attack—at least for some days to come.

Mrs. Kelsey and America had watched the frightened invaders through a peek-hole in the tule wall, similar to the peek-hole in the drop at the theater through which theatrical people size up the house, although they felt more like amateurs on their first night as they get their first peek-hole view of a crowded house.

Kelsey shouted to open the door, which they did, as the Indians were engulfed by the shadows of the oak forest far off.

"A fine old cannon this," said Kelsey.

This was not the first time that this same cannon had been used to frighten the Indians. If it could have told its story it would have related the experience two printers had with it when bringing it across the prairies. They were attacked by Indians, and having no shot, filled the swivel with the type they were bringing to Yerba Buena (now San Francisco). Waiting until the Indians were within range, they fired the gun, filling them with type, sending many to the happy hunting grounds and permitting others to carry in their bodies portions of editorials that might have made their author another Horace Greeley.

But that is a story the first family at French Camp did not know.

CHAPTER II.

ENTER, A STRANGER.

Life at the Kelsey mansion was not an idle dream. Existence depended upon hardihood, labor and faith. A man needed this happy combination in this land in those days—1844.

When Gulnac gave David Kelsey the square mile of land he did not fence it, neither did he clear it of the wild vegetation that grew where the paved county highways now stretch with acres and acres of highly cultivated land and numerous prosperous homes on either side. Where now whirls the auto then roamed the bear, antelope, wolf and their various fellow creatures.

David Kelsey was a real pioneer. He trod the grass in the great San Joaquin valley where white man had never stepped before. He forced his way through tules that had been disturbed before by none save the aboriginal natives of the country and the beasts. He was the first farmer of the French Camp section and with dif-

ficulty cleared a small tract of land, planting it in wheat. The grain grew, rivaling the grass in its growth. When it began to ripen, birds of rare plumage threatened its destruction and a source of great worry for David Kelsey was this field of grain.

In due time he harvested it and threshed it after a crude manner. Boiled wheat was often on the bill of fare at the Kelsey home. Mint tea was made from the mint America gathered along the banks of the creek.

America's life was close to nature. Her mother taught her her A B C's; constant touch with nature taught her the calls of the various birds, the cries of the wild beasts, while an alert eye and keen ear served as protection against the raids of the Indians.

"Mother," she often asked, "when will we meet white people who have a young girl? I get so lonesome for a playmate."

"After we have lived here a year, my dear," the mother generally answered. "We must stay here a year and then the land is ours. After that father says we will make a trip to the settlement."

There's little doubt that David Kelsey's faithful wife yearned just as much for the sight of one of her sex as did America for a playmate. Day in and day out on the Kelsey place was not enticing, even though the sky was blue and the sunshine so bright. But she never complained. She had cast her lot with her husband and what he underwent she was willing to experience.

One day America ran into the hut, her eyes dancing.

"Mother, mother!" she exclaimed. "I just saw a man on the stream."

"Here he comes now with father," interjected Mrs. Kelsey.

"Mother," said David Kelsey, "this young man is George Wyman. He's been trapping on the creek, so I kinder thought you might like to meet him, being as we have so little company in these parts. He's quite a pleasant chap. Step into our hut, stranger, and make yourself at home."

Wyman stepped inside, where he met America, whom he formally introduced himself to. She remained close to her mother. David Kelsey offered Wyman a

seat—an oak stump. Mrs. Kelsey brought him a tin cup filled with boiled wheat, fried him a piece of venison and brewed a cup of mint tea, all of which the trapper pronounced the best dinner he had had since he left his mother in the east.

The Kelsey family was so famished for company that they insisted that Wyman stay over night as their guest. They made him a bed in one corner of the hut, his couch consisting of hides. Wyman proved an interesting visitor and told exciting stories of encounters with the Indians, exhibiting his pack of skins as evidence of his prowess as a trapper and hunter. He said beaver abounded on the creek and explained that he was employed by the Hudson Bay Company, whose California department was at Yerba Buena.

“What’s that book he has?” asked America in whispered tones as Wyman removed it from his pocket.

But his ears were attuned to female whispers and he smiled as he replied:

“That’s the Good Book. My mother gave it to me when I left home. She told

me to read a chapter every night no matter where I might be."

"Then read tonight's chapter out loud, stranger," suggested David Kelsey, and the suggestion was carried out, making that evening one of the most delightful the Kelseys had experienced in many months.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIABILITY.

The trapper enjoyed the best breakfast the Kelsey commissary department was able to serve, fastened his pack on his back and prepared to continue on his way, which was in the direction of the Sacramento valley.

"Stranger, ever been in the Sacramento valley before?" asked Kelsey.

Wyman replied that he had trapped the region two or three times and was as familiar with the country as any other man. He described a great river that coursed down the center of the valley, joining the San Joaquin not far from Yerba Buena.

"Fine country," added Wyman. "One has to keep on the lookout for Indians. They haven't guns and keep a respectful distance from mine. From what I can figure out there are different tribes in the valley. They get into some serious mix-ups at times. The Indian villages are numerous, many containing from 50 to 100 tepees."

"How are they built?" ventured America. It was one of the very few questions she had dared ask of the stranger.

"They build them with poles and rushes. Make cozy homes for the Red Men and their families. These huts present quite a sight in the springtime. The Indians are good fishermen and they dry the salmon on the sides of the tepees. When the sun hits the red fish you can spot 'em for a long ways."

Wyman shook hands with all the Kelseys, thanking the family profusely and in an offhand manner remarked that he had left a couple of hides for the young lady, this intelligence apparently meeting with her complete satisfaction, judging from the pleased expression that brightened her countenance.

"By the way, stranger," said Kelsey, "if you see a cub bar down the trail a ways, don't shoot it. It belongs to the daughter. Captured it with the old mother in a log trap a few months ago. Set the trap with fish entrails after they had got good and strong. Lord, man, you could smell them a mile. Next morning I went down to the trap and thar was a whopping big bar inside it. 'Twas early

in the morning and not very light. Sez I to myself, 'thar's something on top that trap.' Taking aim, I fired. Lawsy, wish you could of seen that animal leap into the air! But I had hit him in a vital spot and he fell on the ground dead as a doornail. I ludded my old trusty before proceedin' any further as I ain't taking any chances with a wounded critter. As I got closer I seez that I had shot the biggest wildcat I ever saw in this country. 'That's his hide on the floor of the cabin.

"Inside that trap was the old mother bar furious as the wildcat had been before he collided with the bullet. I put the gun between the bars and ended her career. Peering inside, I saw something move. It was the cub I just spoke about. I captured the little fellow and have it corraled down the trail a ways. It's getting tamer every day. Won't let anyone feed it, 'cept daughter, so we call it her bar, which it is. Good-by, stranger. Glad you stopped over. Company is so scarce in these parts."

"Good-by, you all," replied Wyman as he proceeded on his journey from the San Joaquin to the Sacramento valley, wondering whether he would meet the Kelseys again.

CHAPTER IV.

A TALE OF A TAIL.

David Kelsey had had no little experience with Indians himself. He had learned many of their peculiarities, partly by observation and partly from stories just such as Wyman had narrated. He enjoyed telling stories of the hunt and tales of adventure with the Red Men, and had entertained both his faithful wife and pretty daughter on the long winter nights with his narratives. There was one he always enjoyed and he no doubt regretted that he had not unwound it on the stranger. It struck his vein of humor and many was the hearty laugh he had as he told this story—a tale tough on the particular creature involved, a tale of a tail.

It seems a trapper had a dog that had a reputation as a hunter. This canine, a stub-tailed dog, caught more squirrels, mink and other small animals in a week than the average dog did in a month. He was a natural-born hunter and his master prided him much for his ability along those lines.

There was an Indian, one who had been tamed by the good Fathers who first penetrated into their haunts, who also had a dog. This particular dog had a long tail. The Indian had seen the stub-tail dog bring in his game and had tried to teach his dog to do likewise, but with little success.

In despair he approached the white man, and in poor English asked him why his dog was such a good hunter.

"That's because he has a short tail," replied the white man.

"Make em mine hunt?" asked the Indian.

"Sure," replied the white man.

The latter procured an ax and gave it to the Indian, explaining that he would hold the dog over a stump. He held the dog's tail over the stump and signaled to the Indian to drop his guillotine. Just as the owner of the dog started to perform the operation, the white man gave the dog a shove and the poor brute was chopped in two.

"Huh," grunted the Indian. "Heap cut em too much short." With a look of disgust he walked away.

Kelsey had seen the Indians when they were stricken with a fever that killed them by the score. Their treatment for the sick was almost sure death. They dug a hole large enough to accommodate a number of the afflicted and covered it over with soil, leaving a small aperture at the top through which the sick were crowded. A hot fire was then built within and the aperture closed, leaving the sufferers to roast. Immediately after being baked, the sick were taken out and dropped into a cold stream. This sudden shock sent many on their way to the happy hunting grounds.

Indian tradition ran that during the summer the valleys experienced periodical showers of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, prior to the time the white man intruded upon their domain. After that the Great Spirit showed his displeasure at the coming of the white men by withholding the rains, his plan being to drive them out because of the lack of the moisture. When the whites left he would bring the rain again. Another tradition was that a great flood once swept the valley, being further evidence of the Great Spirit's displeasure.

Indeed, the Kelseys knew by practical experience what floods meant. While the great valley in which they lived was a paradise in spring, delightful in summer and heaven compared with blizzards and cyclonic storms they had experienced with winters in the states, one particular winter season had proved most distasteful from the standpoint of water. It rained hard in December, January and half of February—not every day, but sufficient to keep the ground water-soaked. In the beautiful hills in the east—hills that had a hidden secret to be exposed a few years later that would draw men from all points of the globe as a magnet draws fine pieces of steel—snow had fallen heavily. On the few clear days the Kelseys experienced that winter they could see the peaks of the hills snowcapped and set in a background of azure blue. America climbed the tallest oak and for hours gazed at the wonderful sight. She loved nature and none of nature's beauties escaped her quick eyes, even to Wyman's curly locks.

A warm spell followed these weeks of rain and one morning America, while walking along the bank of the creek, observed the water more than usual. It was

of a muddy color, much like clay, and pieces of driftwood, branches of trees, etc., floated down. She called them her boats. In places the water had spread beyond the banks of the stream, forming miniature lakes.

Upon her return home she told her parents of her observations.

"You don't think, father," asked Mrs. Kelsey, "that there could be any danger of the water reaching our cabin?"

David Kelsey spoke reassuringly, but said he thought he would take a look at the stream himself. He soon returned.

"Mother, we better be moving to that high ground yonder. I don't like the looks of things here. The water is rising rapidly and I'm afraid this warm spell is melting the snow."

So the three Kelseys packed their few belongings to the highland, piled up what wood they were able to gather and waited the oncoming of the waters. They waited but a short time, as the waters rose with wonderful rapidity, stretching out over the land in all directions. As far as their

eyes could see in the east was water—one great sea. It was a terrifying sight, yet fascinating. As the water crept closer to the highland America lost her interest in the sight, and cuddled close to her mother. David Kelsey, accustomed as he was to trials and dangers, could not refrain from showing his worry. He did not fear for himself, but all he had in the world—his faithful wife and daughter—were in grave danger. He knew not how high the water would come, nor how long it would remain on the land.

He stuck a small branch at the edge of the water and kept close watch on the same. Finally he told his wife that the water was at a standstill. He said he felt the worst had passed and that they would be safe.

It was a long night they spent on their enforced island home and anything but an agreeable one. The wind came up and blew cold blasts across this newly made sea. The three huddled around the campfire, wrapping themselves in their hides.

The break of day rang up the curtain on a scene of desolation. The water had subsided to a point below the sad remains

of their tule hut and everywhere was debris, while the ground was covered with yellow slime.

But David Kelsey was undaunted and was soon at his task of rebuilding his home. It was discouraging work, but by evening he had a home that kept out the wind and afforded some shelter to his wornout wife and daughter. It was an experience that tried their nerves, one that brought home the ordeals of pioneering in a land that today has everything civilized man could desire.

CHAPTER V.

JOSE JESUS.

While the majority of the Indians resisted the attempts of the Spanish Fathers to civilize them, having desired to follow their natural inclinations from the time the good Father Crespi, the first white man to behold the waters of San Francisco Bay, attempted to do so, Jose Jesus, being a leader among his people, submitted to the teachings of the mission fathers. He developed a remarkable conception of the ideas and ideals of the white man. He even went so far the white man's way as to become an alcalde at San Jose.

Some of the fathers used forcible means of making the Indians adopt civilized ways. They threw military forces into the Indians' quarters, captured a number of them and took them to the missions for the good of their souls. One of the expeditions lost 34 men in a battle on the Stanislaus river. They made a second

attempt, losing 41 more, but succeeded in capturing two score and four Indians, mostly women and children. Chief Estanislao, in whose honor the Stanislaus river obtained its name, defeated the Spanish forces, but died shortly after.

It was Estanislao whom Jose Jesus succeeded. Jose could not resist the call of his youth, and, like the college bred Indian who discarded his tailor-made suit for a blanket, went back to his people. He was received with open arms, declared their chief and became the hero of the hour. For three days the tribe feasted and made merry, their Indian dances having been rare exhibitions of the terpsichorean art. The Maxixe and bunny hug would have been compelled to take back stage for the performances the Red Men gave. Their stage setting consisted of a green pasture, sprinkled with the most beautiful golden flowers, a flower which later became the symbol of state, stately oaks whose branches shaded the greater portion of an acre forming the background. Their dancing costumes were wonderful creations, there being absolutely no question as to the fact that they were made in U. S. A. They were distinctly American

products as they were manufactured by the original American himself. And the most elaborately painted actress of the present-day vaudeville stage would have been put to shame with the coloring scheme these natives of California adopted. There were no delicate shades—the bright crimson, stern black and glaring yellow having been used without any softening. The effect was marked (the marking being principally over their faces and arms).

Jose told his people that they had been mistreated and that the padres had wronged them when they deprived them of the herds they had assisted the fathers to accumulate. He proposed that they raid the missions and drive back to their rancheria, which marked the present site of Knights Ferry, the herds of cattle.

The plan met with the hearty approval of the Siyakumna tribesmen and elaborate plans were made for the first of a series of foraging expeditions that raised havoc with the missionaries.

There was one serious difficulty in the contemplated raids and that was the danger of a conflict with the Yachekos. The

Siyakumna's territory extended from the Stanislaus river to the French Camp creek, but they seldom came down as far as the Kelsey place, because there was grave danger of running amuck with the Yachekos. They had had mixups with this tribe and were not looking for further trouble, unless as a matter of absolute necessity. The Yachekos considered the Calaveras river their northern boundary, but came down as far as the Kelsey place, the present site of the city of Stockton marking their southern boundary.

Jose's education, coupled with his natural knowledge, made him a great chief. He took the precaution of sending spies into the Yacheko territory. It was several days before they returned. They told startling stories of the strength of the Calaveras tribe, stating that they were about equal in number to the Siyakumnas and as well armed, judging from their rather distant observations. Once the spies came very nearly being captured, a party of the enemy having passed within a few feet of their hiding place. They had to remain in the brush until dark and then hastily sneak out to where their ponies were hidden.

Jose called the Indian medicine men, and after due religious ceremony, proceeded on the march toward the Calaveras stronghold. He realized that in order to carry out his raids successfully he would first have to subdue the Yachekos, and that was what he had decided to do. He had his plans mapped out to the smallest detail. He did not intend to throw his entire forces upon the Yachekos in a massed formation. He had a better plan. He intended to divide his forces when within a few miles of the Yachekos' territory, send one north and wait until it had had time to get as far the other side of the enemy's camp as his division was. He estimated the time it would take for the second division to accomplish this feat and set the hour for the attack. At first he decided to make the assault at night, but not knowing the country well enough, deemed it better judgment to do so at break of day. He sent one of his best braves in charge of the second division and made camp, waiting until the hour set for the battle.

CHAPTER VI.

A JOURNEY BEGUN.

The flood that wrecked the Kelsey home made life even harder than before and the battle for existence taxed David Kelsey to the utmost. Boiled wheat is not a rare delicacy and Mrs. Kelsey found the utter lack of household equipment a burden that made her part of the pioneering anything but interesting. America was growing and her clothing was far from being adequate. With affairs in this condition, David Kelsey, after turning the question over in his mind time and again, came to the conclusion that he would have to visit Captain Sutter and secure the few necessities of life that drew the line between the white man's mode of living and that of the barbarian.

He did not relish the trip and he disliked breaking the news to his wife, but one evening made the suggestion that they go. He expected opposition on her part, but to his surprise found that she was quite willing—even enthusiastic. America

grasped the situation in an instant and jumping for joy, cried aloud: "Oh, goodie, goodie. We shall see white people."

David Kelsey then saw why the "ladies of the house" were enthusiastic over the suggestion he feared they would oppose, the cause of the anticipated opposition being the danger of meeting the Yacheko Indians. The idea of meeting white people, however, loomed up before the mother and her daughter, outweighing any fear they might have had. So anxious they were to see someone that dangers of such a trip were for the moment absolutely forgotten. Month in and month out on the French Camp creek with only one visitor grew mighty monotonous. Robinson Crusoe had little on the Kelseys when it came to lonesomeness. Mother entertained daughter and at night David Kelsey entertained both, but even at that one yearns for the company of others than the members of his family.

The plans for the journey were carefully made. They were the all-absorbing topic of the evenings and at meal time. As the trip was quite a distance and would take several days it would be necessary

for both Mrs. Kelsey and America to carry a portion of the camping equipment, little as it was. Kelsey had an old rifle—part of the equipment absolutely necessary.

They agreed to start early in the morning, enabling them to make good headway before the day grew old. The father of the household made packing sacks out of hides for the purpose of relieving the burden each was to carry.

All preparations complete, they hid the old cannon and struck out for Captain Sutter's headquarters on the Sacramento river. The first few miles of their journey took them over a pretty stretch of country, slight difficulty being experienced in crossing a stream that gained the name a few years later of Mormon channel because of the fact that a party of Mormons camped at its mouth. It was one of the streams that gave a city yet to be, the nickname "Slough City," a name that the inhabitants did not relish. That there was to be a city there some day, a city that would be the gateway to the great San Joaquin valley, never occurred to the Kelsey family. The part that particular section was to play in the life of the Kel-

seys was also something they had no knowledge of. Their future had not been prophesied—perhaps much the better for them all.

They experienced a little difficulty crossing the stream. The water had subsided, leaving sandy islands, which did not support their weight without first engulfing deeply their moccasins. Disagreeable as it was, all three had to ford the stream. They proceeded about a mile beyond the waterway, where the father made a campfire in order to dry out their clothing. He thought the surroundings enticing and deemed it advisable to stay overnight there. He didn't put the suggestion in those words, but expressed himself to that effect. He had a more important reason than announced for camping there. He feared he might run amuck with the Yachekos and decided it would be better to pass their neighborhood before daybreak. Kelsey had been told the Indians camped somewhere near the river that was north of the stream he had crossed. They often came down as far as his camp, so he was on the lookout for them at most any part of the journey.

He did not tell his wife and daughter. The trip was difficult enough and he did

not care to burden them with worries concerning a possible collision with the Indians. David Kelsey always gave first thought for the safety of his wife and daughter. Everything he did was for their sake. To give a little happiness, provide a little amusement for the two dearest to his heart was the constant aim of this man. His task was at times a difficult one, because there were no "pretties" from the stores that he could buy. A cheerful disposition and a fatherly caress were all he could offer, yet they meant so much for Mrs. Kelsey and America.

"Father," asked America after they had partaken of their lunch, "will we start before sunrise?"

"Guess we had better, little un," he replied. "You'll have to go without your beauty sleep tomorrow. You've got beauty to spare, though. Look just like your mother. Your hair is getting much like the golden flowers that grow around our cabin."

The first lap of their trip had tired them and the few hours they remained at their camp served to rest them for the trials of the next day.

CHAPTER VII.

AS THEY WITNESSED IT.

The sun had not yet shown his face in the east when the Kelseys, their packs on their backs, were well on their way northward. At times Kelsey feared he might lose the general direction he was bound for. He had had such experiences, having walked for days only to find that he had executed a complete circle, arriving at the point in the circumference from which he had started.

They were not far from the river, he judged, when America, who was always seeing some of nature's wonders, called her parents' attention to a monstrous oak, under whose branches they were then passing.

"'Tis a whopping big tree," acknowledged the father as he rested his pack against it and peered into the deep foliage that marked its great branches.

He had barely made the remark when the tread of horses' hoofs broke the seren-

ity of the scene. Both Mrs. Kelsey and America caught the sound. In an instant Kelsey beckoned to the two to drop upon the ground, doing the same himself. Slowly they crawled around the base of the great oak, endeavoring to keep from view of the approaching horsemen.

A few minutes brought the riders within better range of the Kelsey family's vision and it was plain to them that it was a tribe of Indians, all of whom were in their war paint. They were riding at break-neck speed, lying on the ponies' necks. It seemed to America that her heart was going to jump right out, so hard did it beat. She caught a glance from her mother, who was deathly white. A look of horror marked the countenance of her father, whose hands tightly gripped his rifle.

On came the Indians, until it seemed as though they were riding right at them. When Kelsey had decided that there was absolutely no hope of escaping them, he was relieved to see the leader, a man over six feet tall and of great physique, turn toward the west. Kelsey watched him, then glanced in the direction in which he was going and to his further amazement

saw by the aid of the sun's first rays, an Indian village. There was no activity at the village.

"Why are they riding at such a mad pace if they are returning to their tepees?" asked Kelsey to himself. "They ride like they are after somebody's scalp."

The question was answered by the scene that next met his gaze. He observed sudden activity at the camp. Shadows moved here and there, increasing in number until it was clear to Kelsey that the Indians in the village had been apprised of the coming storm.

"Gosh," exclaimed Kelsey, "sure as we're here, it's an Injun scrap. I've heard that the Yachekos and that fellow Jose's tribe were deadly enemies. I'll bet that they are at it. Lawsy, it will be some clash. If we were only safe, I'd give a whole lot to see those red devils go to it. Keep still, both of ye. Perhaps the good Lord will save us. If they get interested enough in their own troubles they may overlook us. As long as the invaders win, our chances are good, but if the Yachekos drive them back they are bound to fall on us."

Kelsey had figured it out right; it was Jose's attack on the Yachekos that he and his wife and daughter were witnessing. What a scene was to follow! Surely here was something that would remain in the memory of America if she lived a hundred years. How could she forget it!

Jose's coup did not mature just as he had planned. He expected to catch the Yachekos napping—more properly expressing it we'll say sleeping, but some one had been awake and either heard or saw the enemy. The alarm was quickly given and before Jose's warriors reached the camp the Yachekos were armed and astride their ponies. They did not drive toward the enemy, but stringing out toward the south, attempted to encircle the invaders. Jose was too quick to be caught in such a trap and his men broke from their massed formation, forming a fairly straight line that made a diameter of the semi-circle they forced the Yachekos to assume.

The clash came quickly. It seemed like a flash to the Kelseys. As the warriors got within range of one another they filled the air with their yells, sending chills down America's back. Arrows flew and numerous were the marks they found.

The Yachekos, however, made a fierce fight. They were stubborn warriors and Jose found he had his hands full. For a time things looked discouraging to him. Something had gone wrong. Plans as he had arranged them called for the arrival of the second division of his forces at this point. Where were they? Why had they failed him? Unless they came soon it meant probable defeat of his forces, as they were outnumbered, and possible annihilation. His men fought like the savages they were. Tomahawks swung right and left, their blows resulting in awful carnage.

Screams rent the air and poor little America hid her head on her mother's breast, weeping hysterically.

"Hush," admonished the father, as though the cries of his frightened offspring could attract the attention of the savages engaged in their deadly combat.

The Yachekos retreated when the battle was at its height, again trying to encircle the attacking Red Men. This time it was difficult for Jose's warriors to form a battle line. Their ranks had been thinned considerably and it was hard to reform under

the circumstances. However, they managed to prevent the Yachekos from carrying out their tactics a second time, but it was evident to David Kelsey that Jose's chances of winning or even saving his forces from entire destruction, were growing slighter as the fight continued.

It also appeared to Kelsey that the Yacheko semi-circle was growing and growing in the direction of his refuge. Mrs. Kelsey likewise saw this.

"David," she cried, "they're coming this way. Oh, what will we do, what will we do?"

"Lie still," he replied. "Don't move a muscle."

Jose was being forced back and he was retreating in a southeasterly direction, which was bringing him toward the big oak, behind which the three Kelseys lay, trusting in God.

Jose rode at breakneck speed to the head of the line and was nearest the big oak tree when one of the Yachekos, who was at the extreme end of the semi-circle, saw the three Kelseys lying at the base of the tree. The Red Man stopped for a second as though stunned. Apparently, he could not realize the sight that met his gaze.

He shouted to two of his companions and pointed toward the big oak. The trio seemed to forget the enemy was at hand; they seemed to overlook the danger of being struck down by an arrow. Kelsey had endeavored to crawl further around the tree and it was his moving that first attracted the attention of the Indian.

Jose himself saw the three stop and was puzzled as to the cause of their actions. He wondered what their ruse was. He had ridden so fast he was not more than 100 yards from the tree. The three Yachekos soon reached a decision. They intended to dispatch the man and capture the women. Turning their ponies in the direction of the tree, they started on their way again.

"Lie low," shouted Kelsey as he took a bead on the foremost of the three. "Don't run as they will be bound to shoot you. Don't cry, America; there is still a chance. That's the brave girl you are."

He waited until they got within good range and then fired. The leader fell off his horse; the bullet had gone true. The two others seemed stupefied. The sound

of the gun was audible even over the din of the yelling and the cries of the wounded. The smoke of the gun added to their fears. They had had experiences with the cannon and, although they did not possess firearms, had a most wholesome respect for the same. Jose was dumfounded, but a scene on the other side of the enemy's line first gave him great cause for alarm. He feared the Yachekos were bringing up reinforcements. This would mean his ruination. He was in a bad fix as it was and fresh warriors would give the Yachekos encouragement and dishearten his men.

He watched them as they came on, suddenly appreciating his mistaken cause for alarm. It was his own men—the delayed division he had expected at the beginning of the battle.

They struck the Yachekos from the rear, raising havoc with them. The sight inspired Jose's retreating forces and they turned and made a renewed attack. The Yachekos fought gamely, but the odds were against them. They were slaughtered in great numbers, perhaps the largest number meeting their death upon the

banks of the river. Their skulls were unearthed some years later, thereby giving the river its name, the name it bears today—the Calaveras, meaning skull.

The Yachekos finally dispersed, the enemy pursuing them far to the north. The day was won. And the Kelseys——.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE.

As the chase of the Red Men continued, and the distance between them and the Kelseys increased, in like proportion increased the whispering weeping of America until finally she was crying aloud.

"Poor little girl," said her father. "You are so frightened. Your old dad isn't having any picnic, either."

Caressing his wife, he said to her, possibly wondering whether the little family was together for the last time:

"A brave mother, ye are, and there's much you have undergone, but this is the worst yet. We put our trust in the good Lord. He has helped us out of other scrapes and we aren't giving up yet."

"Yes, father," replied Mrs. Kelsey. "What is best for us to do? Hadn't we better try to get away? They'll not forget our hiding place and when the fight is over they'll come after us."

"That's true," he admitted. "Yet if we leave we may miss the refuge this tree gives us."

"Let's go, father," cried America. "Let's go quick."

Kelsey raised himself to a crouching posture and endeavored to view the situation. The Indians were far off. There appeared to be none within close range. He hastily took in the lay of the land. There was a cluster of oaks not far away. Why not make a dash for the forest?

"Come," he ordered. "Crawl as close to the ground as possible. Follow me."

The grass grew in abundance and made it quite possible for them to reach the trees without being seen. There were spots where skirmishes had taken place and there the grass was stamped down. Here and there they ran across arrows, evidence of the terrific battle that had been fought. They had made fine progress. Kelsey peered once again in the direction he last saw the Indians. They seemed closer. They were undoubtedly returning. He realized that much depended upon the speed they made in reaching the forest.

"We must move faster," he said.

They had gone back to the first method of getting about—that of crawling and they had lost none of their efficiency. Force of circumstances sometimes make a man swim, 'tis said, when he never swam before. Not even America had crawled for years, let alone her father and mother. All three were striking a fast pace now.

They were now less than 100 feet from the edge of the wood. In a few minutes they would be within its embrace and while not absolutely safe, they felt that it was a step toward safety.

“Just a little more,” urged the father, “and we will be out of their sight. Here’s hoping they get so interested in celebrating their victory that they forget us. If we can remain in the wood until dark the chances of safety are much in our favor.”

Now they were at the very edge. A few more feet and they were there. They did not rise to their feet until well within the thicket and then they stood absolutely motionless, still fearing any movement might disclose their whereabouts.

They could not even see the Indians, so thick was the wood. Spaces of light showed them where the edge of the forest was. Gaining a feeling of semi-safety

they proceeded further within the wooded area. The crackling of twigs under their feet caused America to shudder.

"I'm afraid they might be in here," she whimpered.

Hardly had she expressed her premonition when half a dozen Red Men sprang from a thicket of brush, quickly disarming Kelsey, and because of their fear of the weapon he carried, dropped it on the ground. It was but a few minutes' effort to bind the three.

The Indians conducted Kelsey and his family to the Yacheko village. There they found the victors and there they met Jose, who had just returned with his jubilant warriors. It was to Kelsey's amazement that Jose addressed him in Spanish. He told him not to fear and ordered his men to release the Kelseys.

"I saw you protect them when you were behind the big oak," said Jose. "My braves tell me they found you in the forest. They had been stationed there to catch any of the bad Yachekos who might try to get away. We will not hurt you. We are after the Yachekos and our stock, which the Spaniards took. They have no right to them. Where you live?"

It was sometime before David Kelsey realized that this was the real situation. He looked at his wife and America, who was still sobbing. She clung to her mother. In due time Kelsey's tongue recovered its power of speech, and he replied in broken Spanish that he lived in the valley near the stream.

"That way we go," said Jose. "You go with us."

Not desiring to cross the resolute leader of the Siyakumnas, he consented, gladly giving up his plans for the trip to Captain Sutter's.

"Where your bang?" asked Jose.

Kelsey explained that it was in the forest, and the Chief asked him to get it. The Red Men retired gracefully as Kelsey returned with his weapon. Jose examined it carefully, returning it to Kelsey, apparently content to allow him to keep it. That night the Kelseys slept in a wigwam, one formerly occupied by a Yacheko family.

"I told you, mother," said David Kelsey, "that He would help us."

CHAPTER IX.

ACCOMPANIED HOME.

America never dreamed she would ever take a walk with Indians and live to tell the tale. Her experiences, augmented by stories her father had told, had caused her to feel that association with Red Men as a pastime was quite beyond possibility, let alone probability.

But strange things happen in this world. Conditions often alter cases and circumstances have peculiar effects upon some people. Kelsey's act in protecting his family from the attack of the Yachekos had, to use parlance of the present day and decidedly not of the early forties, "made a hit with Jose." Then again Jose admired fair play. It was because he believed his people had not been treated fairly by the Spaniards that he had given up the life of an alcalde and had gone back to the tribe. It was for this same reason that he was now on his way to take from the missionaries the cattle which he declared they had buncoed the Siyakumnas out of. How

fortunate for the Kelseys it was that they were first discovered in their hiding place by the Yachekos instead of the Siyakumas. Had it been one of Jose's men he had shot, things might have been vastly different. Thus we see what part circumstance sometimes play in the affairs of life.

Jose endeavored to make it clear to Kelsey that nothing would befall him. He said he had no grudge against him nor his family; that they might live in peace the rest of their years so far as he was concerned. This was typical of Jose and this characteristic had much to do with the development of a certain city yet to be. Jose had future dealings with a man of keen insight and his reputation for fair dealing made this possible.

The Siyakumna warriors searched the deserted village and assembled what spoils they found. They obtained a supply of foodstuffs, some hides and baskets. Like the Indian of later years who was given a stove, which he placed on his squaw's back, relieving her for a few minutes of the burden of the papoose only to place it on top of the stove, these brave warriors cached their booty until some future time when they would send their squaws after it.

A few of the baskets Jose gave to America. She accepted them with reluctance, having been told about Indian givers.

"Take them, America," said her mother. "The Chief wants you to have them."

Arrangements complete, the tribe proceeded on its way, which was over the ground the Kelseys had traveled a few days before. As they passed the place where the white family had camped Jose remarked that some one had been there. His quick eye noticed the evidence of the campfire. Kelsey told him that was where he had camped, the information apparently satisfying the Chieftain.

The sight of the tribe on the march was quite picturesque. America enjoyed it very much as soon as her fears were sufficiently allayed. What a scene for a movie! They were finely built specimens of the original Red Men. Nearly all were tall and bore themselves in a stately manner. They were extremely proud and their recent victory over the Yachekos was responsible for their attitude of being absolutely invincible.

The day after the great battle was one of those delightful California offerings. The floor of the valley was beautiful to

behold. Open groves of oaks were numerous. A grassy sward made a carpet for this floor that the rarest Brussels in the greatest of the world's palaces could not compare with. Near the rivers grew soap plant. The *la yerba buena* (the good herb) grew on a vine with a small white flower and so abundantly did it grow near the great bay that the village, which today is the greatest city on the coast, was first named after it. The *yerba buena* grew along the antelope trail, frequently climbing into trees. The deep green of this natural carpet was relieved here and there with gardens of wild flowers. Fields of the beautiful flowering lupine, which seemed to prefer the neighborhood of water, gave evidence of their approaching a stream. There were places where three or four of these plants clustered together, forming a floral bouquet no florist ever conceived of and filling the air with a rare perfume. Then there were vast fields of the beautiful golden flower heretofore mentioned, which closed its eyes at night and was awakened the next morning by a kiss from the sun. This was America's favorite flower and she never failed to gather armfuls of them.

Bands of elk and antelope were a common sight. In fact, the San Joaquin valley was a paradise so far as its natural beauties were concerned. It was through this beautiful country that the Red Men and the Kelseys traveled until they reached the hut in which the white people lived. David Kelsey pointed to the tule residence. Jose understood. He bade the Kelseys farewell, stating he would send them fresh meat. Perhaps he had a vein of humor as he intended to get the cattle farther down the valley where the missions were.

"I send one of my braves with it," he said. "Feed em to the little girl and she grow strong."

The Red Men rode on, leaving David Kelsey, his wife and daughter at their home. The three watched the Indians as they pressed on their way. They were all thinking it over as the past few hours had provided much for them to ponder on.

CHAPTER X.

THE BEST TEACHER.

We often undertake things in life which we fail to carry out. David Kelsey had undertaken a trip to Captain Sutter's camp, but conditions previously described had interfered and thus, after undergoing hardships and experiences few men of even his day knew of, he, his wife and daughter were back again at their home. At least, they had come to the conclusion that the tule hut on the edge of the creek, now known as French Camp slough, was their home. It was there they existed; it was there they secured shelter from the elements; it was there they ate and slept. So that was why it was home. No pictures graced the walls. Reception room, living room, library, kitchen and boudoir were all in one. You saw them at a glance.

But Kelsey was pioneering. He was to have a section of land a mile square, providing he remained there the allotted time, and he was one of those men who did not know what it was to give up, nor did his

wife urge him to. If she thought differently about it, she kept it to herself. It was impossible at times to prevent the countenance from indicating the feelings existing within the heart. David Kelsey read these looks and he knew without being told when his wife was tired of it all, yet she would never verbally acknowledge it. Probably the next day found her with her spirits brightened and her hopes raised.

She had much to do even though her housework was light. She had a daughter to rear. The Kelsey home was also the district school and it was there America learned her A B C's. That was the least of her lessons, however, as the greatest instruction she received was the art of being a good woman. No teacher in the land, no matter what her college degrees may be, can instruct the student in this art like a good mother can. A fitting example to begin with, Mrs. Kelsey found her task anything but difficult. True, there were no snares nor pitfalls in their immediate neighborhood, and the good work once done was not destroyed by agents of opposing forces. It was all construction without destruction. America Kelsey was

furnished a foundation that would support the weight of burdens life had in store for her, the first American girl to trod the level land of the great San Joaquin valley—pastures for wild animals those days, streets of a growing city today.

Mrs. Kelsey was her instructor in English, in mathematics and in domestic science. America was an apt pupil and learned quickly. She was a postgraduate in natural science and, as before mentioned knew the birds, their habits and haunts. She loved the flowers and always found it a source of great pleasure to pluck them by the armful. Her mother and father encouraged her in these pleasant pursuits, so there was good reason for the character she displayed in later life. Both her father and mother set her good examples and taught her those things that tended for the betterment of her character. The rough existence she experienced taught her not to expect pleasures in life, nor to complain because of the hardships that befall mankind. It had fallen her lot to be the first white girl to live in that locality and she assumed the role with all the bravery one could ask for. She was thoroughly a girl, yet she had seen enough at her tender age

of the stern realities of life and especially of the life of a pioneer, that she was able to withstand trials many a grown woman would have failed to. Surroundings have much to do with one's characteristics. America Kelsey lived in the open. Everything was natural, nothing artificial. The red on her cheeks nature placed there and the golden hair had no peroxide tinge. She mingled with nature's works. She lived outdoors whenever the weather permitted, and the climate of the great valley made it habitable outside the walls of the tule hut the greater part of the time. There were times when the rains made life under the shelter of tules and hides anything but pleasant, and there were also times when great clouds rolled up the rivers and out on the level stretches. We call them land fogs. America called them clouds that had been thrown out of the heavens because they were naughty. She had a solution for all of nature's problems.

"I wonder, mother," said David Kelsey a few days after Jose and his warriors had passed on down the valley, "whether he intends to send us fresh meat. Would taste tolerable good, wouldn't it?"

Mrs. Kelsey admitted beef would be most acceptable but, as was often her way,

raised the question of their right to accept stolen property. She argued that the Indians were going to steal the cattle from the missions and their acceptance of the fresh meat might not be exactly proper.

"I don't believe in hoss stealin' as you know, mother, and hangin' is none too good for cattle thieves, but it 'pears to me that this Injun Jose has some grounds for his foraging. He was an alcalde at San Jose and he is an educated feller. He believes his people have been deprived of that which is theirs. He is some fightin' Injun, as we all three know—"

Then with a twinkle in his eye, he added:

"And I ain't goin' to insult him by refusin' to accept his gifts if he decides to present any. Jose and I are friends and in this lonely country he might prove to be a pretty valuable friend to have."

Mrs. Kelsey did not carry the argument any further. She was satisfied with her husband's logic. Her admiration for him was of the quality that made pioneering in California in the forties possible for some women.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SPOILS OF CONQUEST.

Kelsey was an early riser. He was a firm believer in the adage that runs:

“Early to bed, early to rise—
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

He had often recited it to America when she did not care to retire at the hour her parents wished her to.

Several days had passed since the Kelsey family had resumed their life at the “ranch,” as David Kelsey liked to call his square mile. The Indians had monopolized less of the discussion and the horrors of their experience with the Red Men, while not forgotten by any means, did not continually loom up in their minds. Every-day life was still a hard task. David Kelsey endeavored to make good his agreement to stay on the land, and spent his time improving it. He and his wife talked it all over again and resolved more firmly than ever to “stick it out.”

The head of the house arose at dawn the morning after he and his wife had renewed their decision to carry out their original plans. Peering outside, he saw someone coming toward the hut. Kelsey watched the traveler, endeavoring to make out through the dim light whether he was white man or Indian. The stranger approached to within almost hailing distance when Kelsey concluded he was an Indian, and without further ado, reached for his gun. He stood ready for action, expecting the Indian to drop to a crouching position as was their way of stealing upon an enemy. This Indian did not, however. As he came closer it became evident that he was carrying something.

Kelsey couldn't figure it out. What was he up to, he asked himself. The Indian did not slacken his pace. It was observable that he was burdened with a heavy load as he was bent over under the weight of whatever he was carrying. Kelsey was still trying to figure out what the native was doing when it suddenly dawned upon him.

"By golly," he exclaimed. "I'll bet Jose sent him with beef."

The early-morning visitor was now very near the hut and he shouted in poor Spanish to Kelsey, apparently in order to awaken him. He aroused Mrs. Kelsey, who inquired of her husband what was the matter.

"An Injun outside," replied the latter. Then quickly as though to assure her there was no danger, added, "I think he's bringin' us some beef. Jose told us he was goin' to remember us, don't you recollect?"

Kelsey returned the messenger's salutation and stepped outside, gun in hand.

The shape of the object he had on his shoulders indicated it was a shoulder of beef. To use the parlance of the present day, it sure looked good to Kelsey.

The Indian now stopped before the Kelsey mansion. He handed the white man the beef, explaining as best he could, which was difficult for Kelsey to understand, that Jose had sent the beef for him and his family. Then Jose had carried out his plans and had raided the missions'

herds of cattle The beef made this quite clear.

Kelsey thanked the Indian and told him to wait until he could get him something to eat. The messenger shook his head, stating that he must return to Jose without delay. He said Jose had sent him because he could talk Spanish. He had been at San Jose when Jose was an alcalde and had there learned the white man's language. Kelsey insisted, but the Red Man refused and started on his way back.

The beef proved a rare treat and the entire family felt no conscientious scruples over partaking of it. Mrs. Kelsey spoke of Jose's thoughtfulness and remarked that he was one Indian in a thousand. She was not an admirer of the native Californian. Her experiences with him had not been conducive to bringing about friendly relations. She saw in Jose, however, a man of higher type than his tribesmen and this little act of kindness increased the Kelseys' regard for him. Other white men later had experiences with Jose that caused them to hold him in their high estimation.

The change in diet was highly satisfactory and Mrs. Kelsey found much pleas-

ure in the increased appetite her husband developed. One afternoon when the beef supply had run low, something far off down the valley caught America's alert eye. She hurried to where her father was and called his attention to the sight. He took hold of America's hand and hurried with her to the hut.

"Don't want to alarm you, mother," he said, "but tell me what do you think of that?" and he pointed to the approaching something.

"It can't be that we are going to be attacked by the Indians again, David?" she asked with a show of nervousness.

Kelsey did not know how to answer the question. He was trying to think of something that would be rather reassuring, when his daughter did it for him.

"I think that's Jose and his Indians," she said. "Maybe they are coming back with their cattle."

David Kelsey's countenance brightened.

"I'll bet the little lady's right," said her father.

The three strained their eyes watching the great dark object, until in due time there was no doubt as to what it was—a

tribe of Indians. It was America's quick eyes that saw the cattle the Indians were driving. Any fears that either Kelsey or his wife might have still entertained, vanished with America's announcement.

"Can't you see the cattle?" she asked.

Both David Kelsey and his wife held their hands as a shade for their eyes and saw that their daughter was right. Jose and his Siyakumnas did not pass within very close range of the hut, but Jose took occasion to pay the Kelseys a short visit. He pointed with pride to the cattle, saying he had not stolen them, but had simply taken what belonged to his people.

Kelsey thanked Jose for the beef. The Chief, reminded by this of a matter he desired to speak of, told Kelsey that the Indian who had brought him the beef had been taken ill and was left in company with a couple of the tribesmen a few miles further down the valley, designating the location by stating it was straight down the trail to the river. He said he was very sick, but that as soon as he got better he would come on with his companions.

"Tell Jose we will visit the sick man," said Mrs. Kelsey.

The remark was imparted to Jose, who replied that the white lady was very kind and that maybe her medicine might help the unfortunate brave.

Jose, considering his visit over, bade all farewell and returned to his warriors, renewing their journey to their stronghold in the region of the present town of Knights Ferry. The Kelseys watched them until they were so far away that it was impossible to designate the cattle from the Indians.

CHAPTER XII.

GOOD SAMARITANS.

Big hearted people sometimes rush into places in an effort to do some one a service that cost them dearly. Had the Kelsey family known what the contemplated visit to the sick Indian was going to cost them, they would undoubtedly have given the matter second thought. It played a very important part in their life. Caution is essential for the welfare of anyone. In protecting his family against attacks by Indians or beasts, Kelsey adopted every possible precaution. In this particular instance he did not figure on possibilities which resulted most seriously for himself and those dependent upon him.

Mrs. Kelsey spoke of the proposed visit to the unfortunate Red Man the day after Jose had left. She suggested they go as soon as possible, as immediate attention might prove of great benefit to the Siyak-umna. Her husband agreed, and America

was anxious to go anywhere that offered a diversion from the daily routine on the Kelsey ranch.

The third day after the Indians' departure found the trio on their way to the San Joaquin river at the particular location designated by Jose. It was a delightful trip. The level country and its adornment of flowers and shrubs proved most enticing and made the journey a pleasure. Then, again, they were doing something for one who had been kind to them and who had suffered misfortune. That made the trip doubly pleasant. One always finds pure pleasure and real satisfaction in any undertaking that he knows may result to the benefit of a person in need of help. That's true charity. The charity of alms sometimes falls far below the mark set by that charity which springs straight from the heart. The Kelseys knew the Indian was sick and they knew that the treatment offered him by his own people would not tend to make him any better. Perhaps he suffered from a severe fever. If so, Mrs. Kelsey knew just what would help him. Anyway, she was anxious to do what little she could, and that was why she, her husband and daughter

were on their way toward the great river which coursed from the extreme southern end of the wonderful valley to the bay at Yerba Buena. The Kelsey family was enjoying the very best of health, which caused them to desire all the more to aid the sick man.

The trip was not arduous. It was really most delightful. Upon their arrival at the river they at first failed to locate the camp. There were places along the stream that were passable to the very edge of the water, while much of the bank was covered with a rank growth of willow and blackberry vines. They knew the Indian camp was on the edge of the water, so they hunted for the places where the growth was so sparse that one could reach the stream. They found several of these places and were about to give up when America, who had run ahead a short distance, returned to her father and mother and between breaths informed them that she had found the camp. It was but a short distance below.

There the Kelseys found the three Indians, the sick man and his two faithful companions. Kelsey recognized the Siyakumna as the one Jose had sent with the

beef. He addressed him in Spanish and the Indian replied that he was very sick.

Mrs. Kelsey made inquiry as to the nature of his illness, but gained little information as the Red Man gave no further intimation than he was sick all over. His appearance made it clear that his temperature was high. He drank much water and Mrs. Kelsey, observing this, promptly gave his nurses instructions quite to the contrary. They did not understand what she said, but when she prevented them from giving the Indian a drink, it dawned upon them.

The Kelseys remained with the Indians practically the entire day, doing all they could for the patient. Their kindness was appreciated, although it was with difficulty and considerable dubiousness that the sick man submitted to Mrs. Kelsey's instructions for his care. Through her husband, she gave the Indians strict instructions what to do. They promised to obey, but, as was their nature, no doubt had more faith in their own treatment than the white woman's.

Remaining as late as they dared, the Kelseys finally started on their way home.

Kelsey informed the sick man that if he did not get better in a few days he would call again. He told him to be sure and stop at the Kelsey home if he recovered sufficiently to renew his trip to the Siyakumna village.

The sun was getting low and the little family found it necessary to travel rapidly. The day had been long and all three were worn out when they reached their home, yet they were satisfied with their effort, even though Mrs. Kelsey expressed grave doubts as to the faith the Indians had in her treatment. Nevertheless, their visit had made the day a little brighter for the sick man and that was some satisfaction to these kind-hearted people.

The day was over, but its effects had not yet been felt.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOMETHING WRONG.

The duties of the Kelsey ranch again took the time of the pioneers. A few days after the trip to the Indians' temporary camp, the father complained of feeling poorly. It was one of the very few times he had expressed himself as "bein' out 'er sorts."

Mrs. Kelsey was not at first seriously alarmed.

"David," she said, "you have probably a bilious attack. Better dose up."

"I'll be all right in the mornin'," he replied. "Must admit, my dear, that I don't feel just right. 'Taint exactly like biliousness. Kinder funny feeling all over."

That night he slept but little, and when the next morning broke Mrs. Kelsey was considerably worried about her husband's condition. Sickness she feared in that lonesome country more than anything else. She saw her husband was not a well man. While able to get around, he could not ac-

comply much, and although his wife insisted that he remain in the hut, he refused to obey her.

"I'll be in tip-top shape soon," he said. "A little exercise will do me good."

But exercise did not do him good. His strength lessened with the hours.

That afternoon America, who had been playing in front of the Kelsey home, saw two Indians a short distance down the trail. She called to her parents and both came outside. The Indians continued on their way to the hut. They were the companions of the sick man. Neither could talk Spanish, but after considerable difficulty made it clear that their charge had passed away and they were returning to their camp. Their actions indicated that they, too, were not well.

"Father," said Mrs. Kelsey, "do you remember Gulnac said there was a man living on the point where the river and creek join?"

"Yes. I think he directed us to visit him, but we didn't take time. I think he lives about a mile or so above the river. Has a cabin on the point, which he calls—let me see, what was his name?"

"Lindsay," volunteered America.

"That's it—Lindsay," remarked the father.

"Well," continued the good woman, "I'm afraid you may get worse. Maybe it would have been better had we not visited the sick Indian. That man Lindsay probably has medicine we need. Won't you go with us to his cabin?"

At first he refused, dismissing the subject with the statement that he would soon be in regular trim. His wife insisted, however, and as generally is the case, the husband gave in to her wishes, and within a few minutes the Indians and three Kelseys were on their way to Lindsay point, now the peninsula that separates McLeod's lake from Stockton channel, the present harbor of a flourishing city, then the only sign of the white man's invasion of that section. Lindsay point played an important part in the careers of these three. It was there they learned what true sorrow was; it was there America first faced the bitterness of life. Tragedies are often enacted on short duration. The stage may be within a palace or amid the wilds of a land that has not felt the touch of civilization.

It was a tedious trip, the distance being about four miles. Each step found the sick man weaker. Late that evening they reached the point of land where stood the cabin built by Thomas Lindsay. The owner of the premises was "at home."

"We are the Kelseys," explained the father. "I have been taken sick, so my good wife induced me to see you. She thinks you might have medicine of some kind 'er other that will help me. Kind of presumin', stranger Lindsay, but in these parts we can't wait on ceremony. That's how'n we are here. Hope you'll excuse us."

"You are welcome, stranger," said Lindsay. "You sure don't look well. Thought I saw some one with you."

"Couple of Injuns. They're on their way to their village."

"Wouldn't trust those fellers," said Lindsay. "I haven't any love for 'em and they haven't for me. Sometime I fear they are going to get me right in my house. The good lady and her daughter look tired and worn out. You all make yourself comfortable while I prepare something to eat. Say, Jim, you better give Kelsey some of that medicine of yourn."

Jim was James Williams, a trapper who happened to be at Lindsay's cabin. He produced a bottle of medicine, which he declared was good for all ailments. No matter what your trouble was, the directions read "Take a dose." A string of twenty ailments was followed with the brief instructions "Take a dose."

So David Kelsey "took a dose." He took several of them that night. The effects of the medicine were noticed the next day and with them vanished Lindsay's hospitality.



HILLS THAT DREW MEN FROM ALL PARTS
OF THE WORLD



CHAPTER XIV.

A FRIEND INDEED.

The medicine given David Kelsey brought to light his ailment, as the next morning his countenance bore every indication of the dreaded disease, smallpox. The marks broke out over his body. Mrs. Kelsey was also taken ill during the night and, although physically unable to accomplish much of anything, insisted on nursing her husband.

America began to realize what had befallen her parents. Little did she know, however, of the ordeal through which she was to go.

Her father suffered terribly, the effects of the disease at times making him unconscious. He talked in a rambling manner, most of the time speaking of his wife and daughter. His every thought seemed to be concerning the welfare of those so dear to him. Perhaps he had a premonition of what was coming and, realizing the terrible position his little family would be put

in, tried to figure out in his delirious mind some plan for their safety.

And Lindsay!

The spirit of chivalry died immediately in the heart of Lindsay. One glance at the unfortunate man drove away any charitable instinct he might have had. He knew the danger of smallpox and he did not relish the possibility of being taken down, so he straightway left the cabin.

The Kelseys had to shift for themselves while in the grip of the disease so far as Lindsay was concerned. He did not intend to jeopardize his own health. No, not he.

He located for the time being a short distance away from his cabin, awaiting developments—the developments he felt sure were bound to come. He had seen Indians when they had the smallpox and he had seen them fall off like the leaves in autumn. He knew too well how slim the chances for recovery were, and he was not daring fate. It was self preservation first with him. That was his rule and this occasion demanded its strict enforcement.

That was how David Kelsey, his wife and daughter found themselves practically helpless in the cabin on Lindsay Point.

The horror of it all! It left an impression upon the developing mind of the child that time never erased. She had had many bitter experiences during her young years, but this was the bitterest of all. Her mother and father seriously ill and she practically alone!

Down on her knees she prayed to the good Lord to help her daddy and mother. She mingled her prayers with tears. The day dragged on and the child waited on her parents, offering them what little comfort she could. Her father's delirium increased and he tossed on his bed of furs, tearing at his face until it was scarred as though he had gone through battle. In reality it was a battle. To him it was the battle for his life; not that he was afraid to meet his Maker, but what was to become of them?

The second night at the Lindsay cabin was one of terrible suffering for both the father and mother. The light of the day was never seen by Mrs. Kelsey as the disease had ruined her eyesight. The darkness of that second night was everlasting so far as she was concerned.

"Father, father," she cried. "Where are you?"

There was no answer.

"David, my David! Let me see you once again. Where is America?"

"I'm here, mother," answered the child.

"Where's father, America?" inquired the mother. "Why doesn't he answer me?"

"I guess he's asleep. I'll see."

America stepped quietly to his side. He was asleep. She touched his hand. It was cold.

"Mother!" she screamed.

Mrs. Kelsey understood.

That scream was self explanatory. It expressed the height of grief; the very greatest depth of sorrow. It came from the child's very soul.

"My David! my David!" wept the mother. "Take me to him, America, take me to him!"

The daughter led the mother to all that remained of him who had been so dear to her, had been so true.

"If I could only see him just once," she cried, "just once!"

But for both David Kelsey and his wife sight was no more—for him it was the

end on this earth. His pioneering was over.

It was tragedy in its severest form for America. Her father dead, her mother blind and absolutely no one to lend a helping hand in this hour of grief and need.

Lindsay was waiting developments at his temporary camp when he heard the wails of the mourners. He knew what had occurred; still he did not venture near the cabin.

This was where George Wyman met him that day. Wyman, the trapper, had stopped at the Lindsay camp on his way to the Sacramento valley.

"What you doing here, Tom?" he asked of Lindsay.

"Forced out of my home," replied Lindsay. "The Kelseys are occupying it temporarily."

"Mighty kind of you," replied Wyman. "Met that family at their 'ranch' as they call it about four miles beyond. Let's go up and visit them. Treated me mighty nice when I was at their place."

"No, thank you," sneered Lindsay. "I'm not looking for trouble. I've done

enough for 'em to turn over my cabin to the family. You better look out."

"Look out for what?"

"The old man's got the smallpox and his wife is most blind. The gal hasn't shown any signs of the disease. I think one of 'em, probably him, is dead, because I heard the women crying."

"Dead!" exclaimed Wyman. "What do you intend to do? Haven't you got a heart?"

"I told you I wasn't looking for the smallpox. All I got to say is to carry the old man out and let the coyotes do the rest."

Wyman was as much afraid of the dreaded disease as Lindsay, but that did not prevent him from performing his duty as he saw it. He came to Mrs. Kelsey and her daughter's assistance and tenderly laid the father at rest. History tells us that he was buried at a point now near the southwest corner of Fremont and El Dorado streets in the present city of Stockton.

Wyman did not go to the other valley as he first planned. He retraced his steps as soon as Mrs. Kelsey recovered from the disease, and accompanied the woman and her daughter to Yerba Buena, where they

were provided for by pioneers of a charitable disposition.

The young trapper, after assuring himself that the mother and daughter were in safe hands, resumed his trapping trip over the course he had taken. A week or so found him back to the Lindsay place.

The point of land was bare of its only sign of habitation, ashes and charred wood giving evidence of a raid by the Indians. No one was at hand, so Wyman for the time had not solved the mystery. Trappers he met further up the country, however, had learned the truth from the Indians. Lindsay had left the place after the death of David Kelsey, giving the cabin time to throw off danger of the epidemic. He returned about two weeks later and was killed by a tribe of Indians called the Luckalumnas, who came from a section later known as the Ione valley, Amador county. They fired the house with their victim's body in it.

CHAPTER XV.

CAPTAIN WEBER.

It was 1841, three years before the Kelseys accepted Gulnac's offer to locate at French Camp, that Charles M. Weber arrived in California, a member of a party of thirty-five men and a woman. This party separated, each going his respective way, after reaching the base of Mt. Diablo. Captain Weber and a friend started for Sutter's Fort, passing through the country now known as San Joaquin county. If he had known the future he would have been able to have foretold the growth of a city of 40,000 people on the land he then saw for the first time. Nor did he realize then that he would be instrumental, very much so, in starting this city on her way.

The winter of 1841 and 1842 found Captain Weber a guest at Sutter's Fort. While there he met Jose Jesus and a lasting friendship grew up between them. Jose found much to admire in Captain Weber and the white man was quick to

observe the fine qualities that made up the character of this Indian Chief.

Captain Weber was very favorably impressed with the land where the Kelseys had lived. During one of his friendly chats with Jose, he unfolded to him his plans of settling on the land, explaining that the Americans were desirous to be his allies.

Jose advised the building of an American village at Lindsay Point or thereabouts. He argued that this would place his colony beyond the reach of the Spaniards. Jose's hatred for the Spaniards was everlasting.

The Polo Indians lived in the mountains and one bright day crossed the San Joaquin river and stole stock belonging to Dr. Marshe, a friend of Captain Weber's. The Captain sought Jose and asked his advice. Jose advised an immediate attack against the invaders. An expedition was fitted out and the Polos were located near the headwaters of the Calaveras river. A battle ensued, the Indian camp destroyed and the stock recovered. So effective did Jose operate that the Polo tribe never ventured another excursion beyond the San Joaquin.

Wyman continued his trapping, taking occasion to visit Mrs. Kelsey and her daughter in Yerba Buena. The daughter proved great comfort to her blind mother. Wyman stopped over at the settlement Captain Weber was endeavoring to establish and often recalled the terrible ordeal through which the Kelsey family had gone.

Jose also visited Captain Weber at his settlement and the two talked over the politics of the new country. Often Captain Weber gave Jose gifts to present the Indians, increasing the friendship that existed among the aboriginals and the "good white man." Jose advised him in many matters pertaining to the Indians and Captain Weber and Jose Jesus became the political leaders of the day, bringing about peace and harmony through their policies and the springing up of a new settlement on lands the Indians at one time declared no white man should live upon. Diplomacy was as important in those days as at present, if not more so, and Jose and Captain Weber proved apt diplomats, all of which worked out for the future benefit of a great state.

Captain Weber was expecting a visit from his good friend Jose one day when an Indian runner arrived at the settlement, breathlessly informing the Captain that Jose had been shot. He had been wounded by a white man. Whom the assailant was no one knew. The news spread among the Siyakumnas with rapidity and there was great anxiety among the tribesmen. None, however, felt more keenly about the sad occurrence than Captain Weber. The Captain visited Jose and found him in a serious condition.

"My good friend," said Jose in Spanish when he beheld the Captain, "I'm afraid I am going to leave you. My time has come and I go to the happy hunting grounds."

"No, Jose," replied the Captain, "I've dispatched a runner to a medicine man. He's a good friend of mine and will be here in a few hours. He will help you. You must get well."

Jose grew weaker and was very low when a Dr. W. M. Ryer arrived. Expert attention helped Jose and within a few days he showed signs of improvement. Dr. Ryer remained with him for two weeks when the Indian Chief had recovered sufficiently to be able to move on.

Captain Weber paid the doctor \$500 for his services.

Jose visited Captain Weber before he left and it was the last time the two were together. What became of the brave Red Man Captain Weber never learned. It is presumed he never recovered entirely from the injury he had received and that he passed away at the Indian village in the hills.

Captain Weber continued his labors of upbuilding. He was greatly interested in the stock business and the outlook for securing large tracts of land was most pleasing.

The hardships that made life so difficult in the days the Kelsey family first located in the valley were greatly lessened. This was the period of the "Spain in California," when a life of ease was enjoyed by the Spanish residents of the valley.

Don Pacheto called upon Captain Weber one day and invited the Captain to attend the annual roundup.

"I will come, Don Pacheto," replied the Captain. "I thank you for your kind invitation. There is no reason why your people and the Americans cannot enjoy the blessings of this beautiful land. There is

plenty for all of us and life offers much for every man."

"We will welcome you as our guests, sir," replied the dignified Don. "You are a good man, Captain, and I agree with you. We beg you to overlook any lack of courtesy that may be shown by some of our younger men. They are hotheads, sir, and some would drive the Americans out of this country. I have told these sons of Spain that this land is broad enough for us all and peace at any price is much better than war. We cannot fight America. I know too well, sir Captain, that some day this land will be part of your great domain, even though some of the younger men declare they would die first rather than see your flag float over their lands."

"We simply want to live here with you," replied the Captain. "We take no land we do not pay for and we ask for that which you cannot use. Why should your people act like the dog in the manger?"

"I do not understand."

Then Captain Weber unfolded the fable of the dog in the manger.

"Ah, sir Captain," exclaimed Don Pacheto, "I understand. Again I say you are right. Come to the fiesta and see the

roundup. I declare you my personal guest. I welcome you as my friend."

The vast valley bounded by the Sierras on one side and the range of lower mountains that skirted the ocean on the other, was a playground in those days. It was a garden of sleepy ease, a picnic ground for the Spanish rangers and their ladies. The highest points were marked with adobe houses, the castles of these barons of the valley. The owner overlooked his acres and acres of land from his domicile. These homes were as far as twenty-five miles apart in many instances, yet every family knew every other family and the annual roundup was an attraction that drew all from far and wide.

A day before the big event began Captain Weber started for the scene further down the valley. Don Pacheto's home was near the field selected for the festivities. The good Don was at his castle when the Captain called.

"Welcome, sir," he shouted to the Captain. "Come into my humble house. What I have is yours."

The Captain saluted the Don as was the custom and stepped inside his home. There he met the Don's wife and son.

"Come outside, Captain," invited the energetic youth, "and see my mount."

Captain Weber quickly accepted the invitation and walked over to the corral.

"Elegant animal, young man," the Captain said in admiration of the horse, which had been washed and brushed until his black coat glistened in the sunlight. "A fine saddle, too. Never before have I seen a saddle so rich in adornments. I believe, young man, that this is the finest mount I ever saw."

The Don bowed low, and with an elaborate gesture, said in the most polite manner:

"At your service, sir. Take this animal. Use him as you will. He is yours."

But Captain Weber knew too well the customs of the people. He knew the good-hearted generosity which prompted such offers, and he as courteously declined to accept the gift, which the young man expected of him. It was the custom of the day, a custom that made those days halcyon days in early California.

As the two were returning to the house they saw a man and woman galloping in their direction.

"Some of the visitors to the roundup," explained the Spaniard. "They look like your people, my friend. We will wait for them."

In a few minutes the two people were within closer range of vision.

"Ah," remarked the young man. "An Americano and his lady. They come to learn from us sons of Spain how to ride."

The remark was made with a tinge of bitterness, but veiled with a meaning smile.

The Captain watched the two, making no reply. Suddenly he remarked:

"My good friend Wyman and the Kelsey girl. A fine couple they are."

"Then you know them, sir Captain. Invite them to my father's house. Perhaps the Americano will try to ride the bucking bronco tomorrow? No son of Spain has yet ridden him."

"I dare say he has the nerve to attempt it," replied the Captain.

Greetings were exchanged and Don Pacheto was introduced to Wyman and America Kelsey. Nothing would do but they stay at the Pacheto home.

America was developing into a beautiful woman. Wyman apparently was exer-

cising more than a brotherly care over his charge. Young Pacheto was elaborate in his praises of the girl's beauty and blushes expressed her embarrassment of such compliments. Wyman's expression was not one of satisfaction, and it was clear to the Captain he did not admire the young Spaniard's compliments. The Don's son referred to the big roundup on the morrow and spoke at length of the wild horse no man had yet ridden.

"Perhaps you will try," he said as a dare to Wyman.

The Captain and America both looked at Wyman in anticipation of his answer. Would he try? America felt sure he would tackle anything, but she dreaded to think of his attempting this feat.

"Yes, I'll ride your horse," replied Wyman. "Count me in."

The Spaniard smiled, remarking that the Americano would be given the opportunity to do so.

The roundup was a wonderful sight. The stock men divided their yearlings and traded cattle and stock. The festivities consisted of dancing and feasting. The tinkle of the guitar was almost continual during the fiesta. One of the favorite

pastimes was to ride at a gallop and pull off the heads of live chickens buried in the ground. The big event was the riding of the wild horse. There were horses in those days that defied man to ride them. They were just wild. That's all you can say about them. Any man who witnessed a fellow man try to ride one, knew well enough about them.

"Now we see the Americano ride the wild horse," sneered the Spaniard.

"First," said Don Pacheto, master of ceremonies, "we permit the others to try."

One after another of the young Dons attempted to master the beast, a powerful animal, and one after another gave up the task. They succeeded in lassoing him, but could not mount him. Some had been quite seriously hurt.

"I wish he didn't have to ride that horse," quietly said America to the Captain.

"I'm nervous myself," replied the Captain, "but he is too much of a man not to attempt it. He's quick and has the nerve, so I don't think he'll get hurt, even though he doesn't ride the brute."

Wyman had selected his best lasso. He waited for the horse to leave the small

corral in which he was held. As the horse darted out of the passage way Wyman quickly swung his lariat over the animal's neck. The horse jerked his head ferociously, but Wyman gave him plenty of slack by running toward him. For a moment the animal stood still and then dashed toward the American. Wyman stepped to one side and avoided the attack. Now the horse tried another tactic, Wyman at the same time closing in on him by drawing in the lariat. The animal reared on his hind legs, pawing in the air with his fore legs. As he came down he fell to his knees. This was Wyman's opportunity, and like a flash he was on the animal's back, clasp ing his feet underneath him as the horse arose.

The beast seemed amazed and stood as though puzzled at the burden on his back.

"He has mounted him!" cried the Captain.

"Yes, but he'll never ride him," said young Pacheto.

Horses, like other animals, need but to be mastered once. This was true with this animal. He tried to shake the American off his back; he kicked; he reared and plunged, but Wyman stuck. Worn out

and disheartened the horse made one more attempt. He ran at breakneck speed toward the crowd. By this time Wyman had slipped the other end of his lariat over the horse's nose. The infuriated beast was coming down upon the crowd where the Captain, America and young Pacheto stood. Pacheto grabbed the girl and, in a fit of anger, held her in front of him.

"He ride the horse, but I fix him," he cried.

Wyman saw at a glance what the Spaniard was doing. Pulling with all his might on the lariat, he succeeded in turning the horse's head and likewise changing his course. The animal swerved to one side, throwing a cloud of dust in the face of the girl, preventing a catastrophe that seemed bound to occur.

The horse plunged along a hundred yards further, passing a safe distance beyond the line that was set for the successful rider to cover. Wyman dismounted, turning the beast over to the attendants. He rushed toward the girl and finding her uninjured proceeded to thrash the jealous Spaniard in true American style.

"Don't, please don't," begged America. "It will do no good and may cause trouble

for us all. We are the Don's guests, you know."

Reluctantly Wyman refrained from carrying out his plans. The good Don Pacheto, tears in his eyes, begged most humbly that his son be forgiven.

"He has been punished," said the old gentleman. "Hot-headed boy. He did not realize what he was doing. We are so sorry. His friends they hiss him. We must go on with the celebration."

The festivities were continued and the happy throng forgot the regrettable affair. Young Pacheto that night shamefacedly asked forgiveness, which was granted him, but Wyman never lost track of him during the remainder of the fiesta.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE YELLOW METAL.

Captain Weber returned to his camp, his efforts to establish a city seeming more in vain than ever. He had decided upon a name. It was to be the "City of Stockton," in honor of Commodore Stockton, who was to bring a vessel to the townsite.

Incidents occur at times never expected, bringing about things that look impossible to accomplish. Such it was with this good man's plans. His dreams of a city proved a reality. It was a city that grew almost in a night.

One day while the Captain was attending to details that consumed his attention at his camp, a runner bore him the news that gold had been discovered at Sutter's Fort. The Captain got the spirit along with every man in the great valley who heard the wonderful news.

He and a few other white men obtained the services of a score of Siyakumnas and started on a search for the precious metal

in the hills directly east of his holdings. They met with success in locating the alluring metal, but did not mine it profitably. However, his discovery opened the Southern Mines section, one of the richest gold districts in the world.

This report reached Yerba Buena and up the river came the first sloop loaded with prospectors. Others came overland, as many as 300 crossing the San Joaquin river at one time below Weber's place.

"Hello, my good friend Wyman," shouted the Captain one day after the rush began. "Going to the diggings?"

"I'm on my way to the hills," replied Wyman. "Trapping is no occupation for an active man like me when there's gold waiting to be dug."

"Where is she?" inquired Weber.

"Yerba Buena," was the abrupt reply.

A few days before, Stockton was a tule hut city of one building and few residents other than the Captain and trappers who passed that way. Now scores of men rushed here and there, removing their baggage from scows and schooners and leaving the craft in the channel while they trudged to the hills eastward, hills that

noddled to them to come and help themselves to gold that had drawn men from all climes. It was a mad rush, this rush of '49. It must have been startling to the deer and elk and other wild animals that lived in the valley. Seldom did they see any one save an occasional Hudson Bay trapper or an Indian. Now men with packs on their backs, men on burros and men pushing carts containing their belongings, made their way to the diggings. The bright yellow metal proved a magnet that drew men to the enchanted spot. It brought good men and bad men and a few women. Excitement ran high. Everything was at a fever pitch.

And thus the natural surroundings of Stockton gave way to the march of what was then called civilization, and in the wink of an eye measured as a part of time itself, hundreds of tents and tule huts grew on the level land where before just Captain Weber's solitary abode stood. A thousand souls resided in this city.

Some men find wealth where it is dug from the ground; others, like the wise Captain, find it by remaining at the camp that becomes the base of supplies for the miners in the hills.

Women were so very much in the minority that their influence was not felt to any great extent and men turned in some instances to a state of almost semi-barbarism. They drank, gambled, robbed and murdered. This element was found in the new camp. During these earlier days of the gold rush they did just about as they wished, and that was why Captain Weber expressed alarm when he saw pretty America Kelsey step off a sloop one bright morning.

"My child!" exclaimed the Captain. "What are you doing here? This is no place for you."

"I lived here before this town grew, before it was born," she laughed, "so I don't see why I can't exist here now that the Indians don't annoy us and there is plenty food on hand."

"Ah, America," smiled Weber, "life in those days had its dangers, but I fear the arrival of these men greedy for gold has made dangers far greater than the terrible hardships you experienced."

"Captain," she said, "part of my life here was beautiful and part of it—" Her eyes filled with tears and thoughts of the ordeal through which she passed those

few nights and days at the Lindsay cabin were more than she could stand. Woman like, she had her cry, then dried her tears and chased away the clouds with the sunshine of her smile.

"Have you seen—have you seen anyone I might know?" she asked evasively.

"And I asked you why you came?" laughed the Captain. "Yes, I saw George Wyman upon the arrival of the first gold seekers. He has been down here once since. Says he has struck a good claim and hopes to make a stake. Pretty fine fellow, isn't he?"

"I'm glad you like him."

So America Kelsey became the queen of the camp. She was respected by all, and those who might not have done so, dared not do otherwise.

This scarcity of women made this particularly striking young woman a rare attraction.

"There's a ball at the hall tonight," she overheard one miner tell a group of companions one day. "Be on hand, boys. It's been many a day since I whirled a gal around."

America did not go to the ball, but she enjoyed the account she heard of it later on. According to the story told the Captain, there was a fine attendance of men, but only one member of the gentler sex, a Mexican woman. So the ball broke up before it started. The women were imported by a saloon keeper to deal monte and they proved a big advertisement for the house.

The lawless element ruled things with a high hand. Bill Tubbs walked into one of the gambling houses, chalked a line across the floor and, in order to make clear how bad he was, declared he would shoot the first man that stepped over it. A poor, stupid, drunken sailor accepted the dare and fell to the floor with a bullet in his heart. No one dared to interfere and Bill Tubbs and his gang walked out unmolested.

It was this same Bill Tubbs, whom America Kelsey overheard plotting against one of the miners one day. She was in the Captain's store when she heard their plans.

"Thar's a young feller due here most any day," said Bill, "and he will come with

his swag of dust. Pickings is gettin' short, pals, so we've got to get this handsome youngster. We'll pick a fight or something or other and during the mixup one of us will relieve him of his burden. What do you say to this, my hearties?"

"A fine suggestion," volunteered Shorty Jones. "And about the next day the Vigilantes will send us a note, making us the honored guests at a rope party. I'll tell you how to work the game. Listen to me. He'll undoubtedly cross the ferry. We'll meet him on the way and chuck him into the channel. No one will be the wiser."

All agreed that this would be the ideal method.

America was greatly worried. She asked the Captain if he knew of any one who was coming from the diggings soon. The Captain replied in the affirmative, believing she had reference to Wyman.

"Then, Captain," she said, "we must watch out for him. We must see him first. I have something to tell him."

"That's right, little lady," replied the Captain. "We'll have to see that you meet him first."

America pondered over this affair. She wondered who the gangsters' intended victim might be.

CHAPTER XVII

A MORTGAGED FORECLOSED.

As long as food and supplies lasted, the men who were scratching the surface of the earth in the Sierras east of Stockton continued at their task. When supplies were exhausted they made their way to the camp at the head of the inland waterway and traded gold dust for additional foodstuffs, paying enormous prices for the same. Demand makes trade, and so great was the demand for the necessities of life, that the price went soaring most as high as the highest mountain peak.

An Indian dropped into camp a day or so after America had overheard the plans of the schemers and disseminated the news that one of the prospectors had been seen some distance east. He was on his way to the camp undoubtedly to stock up again.

America got this news as also did Shorty Jones and his gang. It was late in the day when she learned the fact. The Captain was not at his home. She walked down to the point—that narrow neck of

land where she first experienced the sorrow of real tragedy in her home. It was almost dusk, the last glare of the sunset dimly falling on the quiet waters of the lake that opened from one side of the channel.

"Hello, there!" some one shouted from the other side. "Bring your tub across and earn an honest bit of dust," he sang out to the drowsing boatman. The boatman was a character of the camp. He liked to be bantered; he enjoyed salutations of that kind much more than a mere request to paddle across the water and take on a passenger.

"As sure as you're standing there," he yelled back. "Don't get in a hurry, mister. You can't walk across, and it's a long way around the lake."

America was standing in the shadow cast by a great weeping willow. She saw the boatman paddle toward the other shore. He had gotten fairly well on his way when she saw another craft moving from around the point. It contained three men. They propelled their boat slowly, treading water as it were while the boatman's passenger got aboard on the other side. As soon as he started back they pro-

ceeded in a direct line, apparently carrying out well made plans to meet him in the very center of the lake.

America's experiences during the earlier days of the country had made her quick to perceive such schemes, and the whole plot flashed through her mind in a second. The one question she asked herself over and over was: What shall I do? There was no time to run for help. Immediate action was necessary. She ran down to the water's edge, and making her way along the shore a short distance, saw a dark object half in the water and half on the land. A few moments later found her "putting out to sea" in a flat-bottomed boat kind fortune had left there.

The trio in the boat that had set out for the ferry had met the lone traveler in the middle of the lake just as they had planned. Although the light of day had gone she was close enough to the two boats to make out the forms of the men. She saw the man in the ferry stand up; she saw him hold up his hands, but for a second only as he brought an arm down upon the head of one of the pirates and knocked him into the lake. A skirmish followed. Splash! Some one else went overboard.

It was either the ferryman or his passenger—America could not tell which. Curses indicated that it was the passenger, so America bent upon the crude oars, swerved from her former course to meet, if possible, the man floundering toward shore. He seemed to find difficulty in keeping above the water and was making slow progress.

America expected the men in the boat would follow him, but they were pulling toward the opposite shore, leaving the ferryman alone in his boat, dazed and frightened half to death.

It seemed to America she would never reach the swimmer. Perhaps he would go down before she got there! Her strength was taxed to the utmost and she pulled with all her might. The boat drew along the water as though its flat bottom were half stuck in the mud.

Little by little she closed up the gap that lay between her and the man struggling in the lake until finally the two met. He reached for the oar and she hauled him alongside. It was with difficulty that she got him aboard, in the attempt almost overturning the frail craft. He was plainly exhausted and lay face down while

she rowed back to the place from whence she started.

As the boat slid upon the slippery shore, the jar aroused the man. He sat up, shook himself and ran his hand over his face as though to ask "Where am I? What has happened?"

"Come," said America, "we must get out of here. You poor—Why, it's George! Now I understand. The Captain thought I knew it was you who were coming to the camp. Oh, how glad I am that I came down here tonight. Something seemed to tell me to. My poor boy!"

Wyman clambered out of the boat, accepted the hand that was outstretched toward him and trance-like followed her to the other side of Lindsay Point. Suddenly he appeared to understand. He gazed upon the young woman, the golden hair bringing back fond memories. Here these two, the first white woman to experience the beauties as well as the trials and heart-breaking sadness of life in the new land, and the man who helped her place her father in his final resting place when the few others had shamefully deserted her, again stood at the setting of this former tragedy. This time it was the girl,

America Kelsey, the queen of the camp, who assumed the heroic role.

"I'm so glad it was you," she said to him. "I owe you so much."

Wyman, irrespective of the fact that he was soaking wet, folded her in his strong arms. "Yes, so much," he smiled, "that you are indebted to me for life. The mortgage is foreclosed and you must be mine for all time."

The two stood up on Lindsay Point gazing toward the tented city. Had they prophetic minds they would have foretold the growth of a city of 40,000 population, the Gateway City to the great San Joaquin valley, with its acres and acres of rich land, welcoming the homeseekers who come this way this year when the wedding of the oceans is celebrated by the exposition at what was then Yerba Buena; a city where three transcontinental railroads and various electric trains find it most profitable to extend their bands of steel; where vessels of all kinds find a prosperous trade; a

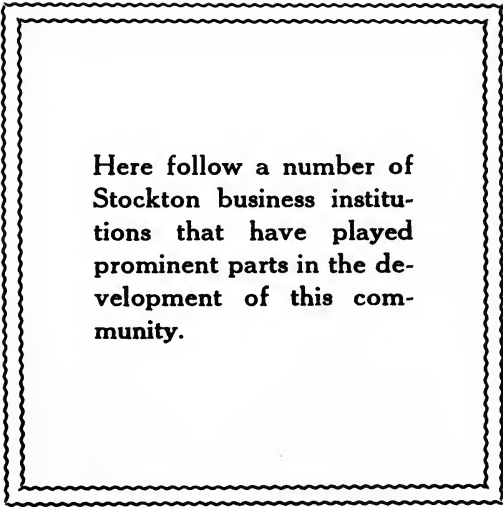
hustling, thriving city in the heart of the greatest state in the Union.

And had they visions of the future their eyes would have seen from Lindsay Point the picture unfolded to your vision on the next page.



STOCKTON, CAL., GATEWAY TO THE GREAT SAN JOAQUIN

THE END.



**Here follow a number of
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velopment of this com-
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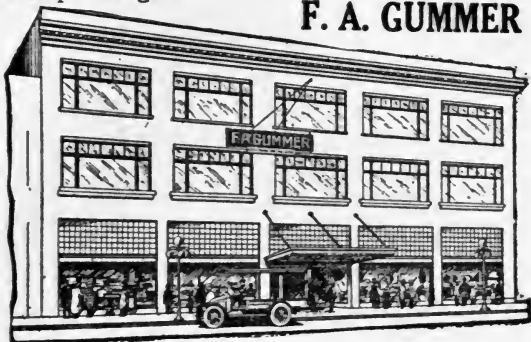
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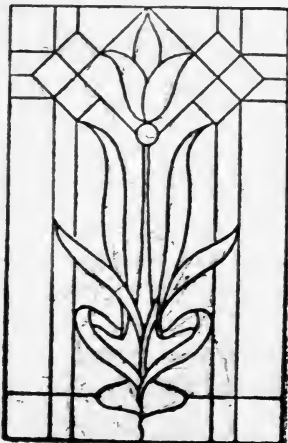
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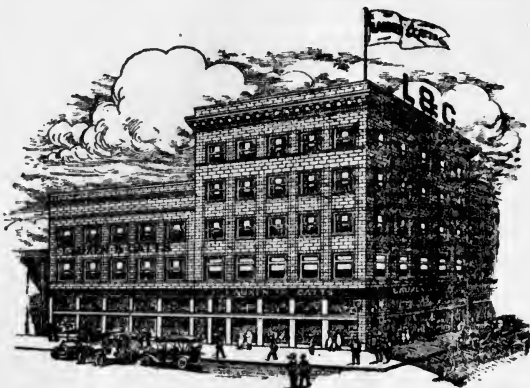
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Market at Stanislaus

IN THE upbuilding of Stockton, besides the many country subdivisions, the Weber Home Tract, McCloud's and Brown's Additions, Sperry Park and Addition, Mossdale, The Oaks, and, notably, Bours Park have played a part. To have had some share in peopling these districts is a source of satisfaction. It is our ambition to be a still greater factor in Stockton's advancement during the next decade.

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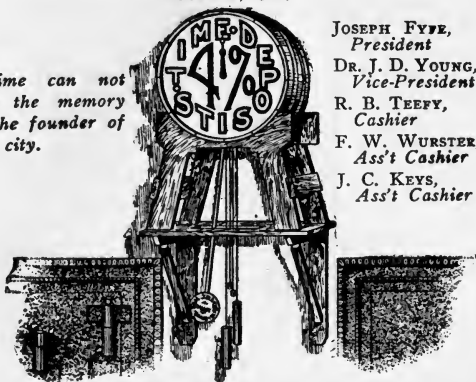
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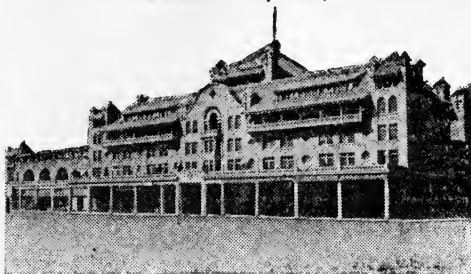
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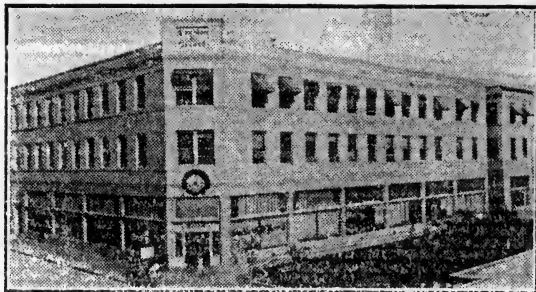
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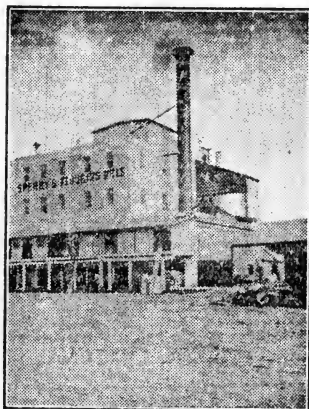
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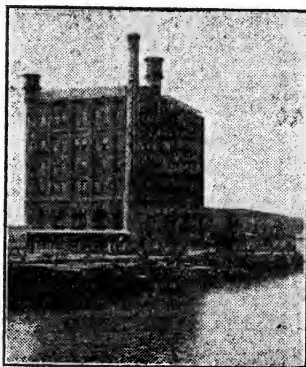
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